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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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1.  a report containing general information on jet pilot training of Syrian  military personnel at Deblin/Irena Airfield in Deblin, Poland. 25X1

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USAF review completed.

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Foreign Military Students in Polish Air Force Schools

1. The Air Officers' School at Deblin/Irena Airfield (N 51-33, E 21-53) was the only air force training center in Poland where foreign military personnel were trained. Although the school offered a number of courses, only jet pilot training was given these personnel. The only foreign students [redacted] at the school were Syrians [redacted]  
[redacted]
2. It was not until the end of 1955 or the beginning of 1956 that the first contingent of Syrians arrived at Deblin. This occurred after an agreement allegedly had been reached between Syria, the Soviet Union, and certain Satellite countries whereby armor personnel would be trained in Czechoslovakia; jet fighter pilots would be trained in Poland; and bomber pilots and a number of other unknown specialties would be trained in the Soviet Union. All Syrian students at Deblin were officer personnel in various grades, who for the most part had never had any flight training. They were schooled at Deblin for approximately one year, after which time they were replaced by another group of their countrymen. One class consisted of approximately 60 students, who were officially known at Deblin and in other air force circles as "Group 400" (Grupa 400). The group did not receive the complete Deblin training program as it was outlined for Polish cadets. Prior to their arrival in Poland they were all supposed to have been "ground schooled" and only in need of flight training. Classes were conducted in Polish with the aid of interpreters. Prior to their arrival, students were required to have a basic knowledge of both the Polish and Russian languages. [redacted] certain of the Syrian students spoke excellent Polish.
3. [redacted] the attrition rate among Syrian students; however, he heard comments to the effect that they made poor pilots. He believed that this could be attributed to a number of facts; notably, the course was not long enough and a language barrier did exist.
4. There was also presumably a considerable amount of friction between the Syrians and their Polish instructors, who claimed that the former had an abnormal lack of ability and absolutely no discipline. The majority of the Syrian students were wealthy individuals who could not, or would not, become accustomed to the rigorous life of a student pilot at Deblin. One of their many requests, which irked not only the instructors but the rest of the personnel stationed at Deblin, was that they be assigned Polish airmen as orderlies; this request was of course denied. [redacted]

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that the main cause of friction was racial. He never met a Pole at the school who actually liked the Syrians; to the instructors, they were nothing but a "bunch of midgets," who, because they had money, were able to roam the countryside with Polish women. [redacted] were it not for the fact that the school had been ordered to graduate as many Syrians as possible, few would have completed the course in accordance with Polish standards.

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